

Message Text

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TO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 253831

FOLLOWING REPEAT VIENTIANE 8491 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK
SAIGON RANGOON 16 NOV

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 8491

AMEMBASSIES PASS TO DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, LA

SUBJ: LAO ATTITUDES TOWARDS UN ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM

1. THE RECENT VISIT OF A UNFDAC TEAM TO LAOS HAS SURFACED
SOME LAO ATTITUDES TOWARDS ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIVITY WHICH
WE CONSIDER INTERESTING. AS ADDRESSEES ARE AWARE, THE
UN PROPOSAL WAS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE PGNU AND WE UNDER-
STAND THAT THE UN HAS BEEN ASKED TO "REDEFINE THE PRO-
JECT."

2. ALTHOUGH THE ATTITUDE OF THE PATHET LAO TOWARDS ANTI-
NARCOTICS ACTIVITY IS FAR FROM CLEAR, WE BELIEVE THAT
THEY ARE INFLUENCED BY A VARIETY OF MOTIVES.

A. THE PATHET LAO ARE KNOWN TO TAKE A VERY STRICT
AND MORALISTIC VIEW OF THE USE OF OPIUM IN THEIR ZONE.

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ALTHOUGH SOME OPIUM PRODUCTION CONTINUES, IT IS OUR

UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS FOR TRADITIONAL CONSUMPTION
AND THAT IT MAY BE EXPORTED AS MEDICINAL COMMODITY TO
NORTH VIETNAM.

B. SOME PATHET LAO LEADERS IN VIENTIANE, POSSIBLY
MOTIVATED BY A GARBLED UNDERSTANDING OF THE TURKISH
SITUATION, HAVE LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THEY CONSIDER OPIUM
TO BE A CASH CROP WHICH LAOS SHOULD EXPORT. THESE INDI-
VIDUALS DO NOT UNDERSTAND CURRENT WORLDWIDE RESTRICTIONS
ON COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING NARCOTICS.

C. THE PATHET LAO ARE GENERALLY OPPOSED TO MULTI-
LATERAL ASSISTANCE AND ARE ACCUSTOMED TO BILATERAL AID.

2. ON THE VIENTIANE SIDE, THERE IS ALSO LITTLE ENTHUSIASM
FOR THE UNFDAC PROJECT. MINISTERS NGON SANANIKONE AND
SISOUK NA CHAMPASSAK HAVE BOTH TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT
THE PROPOSED EXPENDITURE OF \$165,000 WOULD BE ENTIRELY
USED TO PAY THE SALARIES OF UN EXPERTS AND TO PROVIDE
THEM WITH HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, ETC. THEY ARE SKEPTICAL
REGARDING THE USEFULNESS TO LAOS OF SUCH A PROJECT AND
CONCURRED IN THE CABINET DECISION TO REFER THE PROJECT
TO THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND PLAN FOR FURTHER STUDY.

3. WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A COPY OF THE UNFDAC PROJECT WHICH
APPEARS TO US TO BE VAGUE AND BADLY THOUGHTOUT. AS
DRAFTED, THE PROJECT CALLS FOR A UN STUDY WHICH WOULD
DETERMINE THE ROLE THE UN COULD PLAY IN CROP SUBSTITU-
TION, DETOXIFICATION AND NARCOTICS LEGISLATION. THESE
ARE FIELDS IN WHICH LAOS IS ALREADY ENGAGED BILATERALLY
WITH THE US AND WHILE WE WOULD WELCOME SKILLED UN
PARTICIPATION IN ONE OR MORE OF THESE FIELDS, WE ARE
NOT SURPRISED THAT THE LAO FIND THE PROPOSAL UNINTER-
ESTING.

WHITEHOUSE UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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